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SEVEN FELONIES A DAY ON THE SUBWAY

{page 04}



metro

NEW YORK

Tuesday, December 20, 2011

NYC's #1 FREE DAILY



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Min 38°

PENCER PLATTNEY IMAGES



SEA OF BLUE

Thousands of cops mourn one of their own as slain officer Peter Figoski is laid to rest in Long Island Remembered as city hero and devoted dad {page 04}

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Cellphone theft the scourge of subways

► Electronic theft makes up 50 percent of rising subway crime ► NYPD amps up underground enforcement ► 1,600 arrests in a December week

EMILY ANNE EPSTEIN/METRO



► Keep an eye on your cellphones underground.

Subway sting nets thieves

NEW YORK. NYPD Transit Bureau Chief Fox lauded a recent operation called "Tool Box" that was carried out in the first week of December and resulted in the arrests of hundreds of subway criminals.

"This all-out effort by every member of the transit bureau resulted in over 1,600 arrests," Fox said, adding that crime declined 13 percent the following week.

Among all the arrests, the sting netted two knife arrests and two gun arrests, according to the NYPD. ● METRO/EAE

In the news

Firefighter severely burned

Two firefighters were severely burned yesterday at a Brooklyn brownstone engulfed in flames. One firefighter had burns on more than 42 percent of his body, an FDNY spokesman said. Four others were hospitalized, and two remain in serious condition.

● METRO/AB

In the news



Elevator lawsuit

Transel, the company that reportedly performed repairs on the elevator that killed Suzanne Hart hours before her death last week, was sued by another woman. Anne Landle, 94, told CBS2 that she was injured in a Transel-maintained elevator two years ago when the elevator doors slammed shut on her. ● METRO/EAE

2011 was the year of the cellphone crook.

NYPD Transit Bureau Chief Joseph Fox said yesterday the theft of pricey electronics "fueled this year's increasing crime."

The number of total major crimes committed underground increased by 17 percent so far this year, according to NYPD data. The number of total felonies committed each day rose to about seven a day, the highest in five years.

"Nearly 50 percent of all of this year's crime involved electronic devices," Fox said in a statement.

In response, the NYPD

By the numbers

6.88

The number of major felonies, like rape, burglary and grand larceny, committed every day rose to 6.88 per day in 2011, up from 5.85 in 2010. This year was the first year that the number of major felonies committed every day has increased in the past five years, bucking a decreasing trend.

23.9%

NYPD data reveal that 1,395 grand larcenies — the crime usually affiliated with cellphone theft — occurred on the subway from January to November 2011, up from 1,126 reported in 2010. The higher number represented a 23.9 percent increase in the crime.

DO THESE STATS MATCH YOUR EXPERIENCES?
LETTERS@METRO.US

amped up its Electronic Device Crime Reduction Strategy to combat subterranean criminals, Fox said.

The NYPD has been busy luring criminals with decoy operations, reverse cellphone stings and location-focused enforcement, Fox said. In the last month alone, cops have quadrupled

"The closing doors of a train and ease of fleeing off the platform make our subways particularly vulnerable." FOX

their decoy operations' capabilities, Fox said, increasing the number of officers trained to pose as straphangers to capture criminals lured by electronics.

Police also gather information from arrestees about the sale of stolen goods and work with parole officers to create parole regulations that keep repeat offenders out of the subway. Fox said 36 such career subway criminals are barred from entering the turnstiles.

EMILY ANNE EPSTEIN
emily.epstein@metro.us



► Franco

Professor: Grading actor Franco got me fired

NEW YORK. A former NYU professor says James Franco got him fired. Jose Angel Santana, who taught Franco's "Directing the Actor II" classes, told the New York Post he was fired after he

2 Santana told the Post that Franco went to just two classes.

gave the actor a "D."

In a lawsuit against NYU, he said he gave Fran-

co the grade when he missed 12 of 14 classes. Then, he said, he was fired after Franco criticized the grade. He told the Post he now wants his job back.

● METRO/AB

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Slain officer heralded by thousands

Slain Officer Peter Figoski was laid to rest yesterday, in a somber ceremony attended by thousands of mourners clad in blue.

Figoski was killed responding to a drug robbery

Quoted

"Pete's devotion to his own family was legendary. ... Today, we remember how Pete Figoski lived: full of enthusiasm for his family, for his friends and for his fellow officers."

COMMISSIONER RAY KELLY

in Cypress Hills last week when career criminal Lamont Pride, 27, allegedly shot him in the head.

Both Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly were on hand to speak of the veteran officer's heroism and lasting influence.

"It's incomprehensible that someone like Pete, who gave so much to so many, could have his own life taken from him," Bloomberg said, of Figoski's 22 years serving the 75th Precinct in East New York.

Figoski is survived by four daughters.



EMILY ANNE EPSTEIN
emily.epstein@metro.us



► Figoski's family watched as his casket was carried.

Cornell, Technion to create campus



Cornell University and the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology have been selected to build a state-of-the-art applied sciences campus on Roosevelt Island.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced yesterday that the Cornell/Technion proposal was chosen by the city from six remaining finalists after Stanford dropped out of the running Friday.

In addition to the former Goldwater Hospital site on Roosevelt Island and \$100

\$23B The campus is expected to generate \$23 billion in economic activity throughout the next three decades.

million from the city, Cornell received \$350 million for the NYC Tech Campus project from an anonymous donor. The first phase of the Roosevelt Island campus is expected to be finished by 2017, and Cornell and Technion hope to start off-site classes by 2012.

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Group helps city seniors exercise mental muscles

- ▶ Agency provides programs for elderly, from yoga to tai chi to painting
- ▶ Improves seniors' lives by keeping them mentally and physically active



**METRO
GIVING**

Welcome back to Metro Giving! Every other Tuesday, Metro profiles a New York City resident or a group that is giving back to their community in some way. We've written about everyone from a woman who gave up her year-end bonus to feed the hungry to a man who gave his kidney to a stranger. Know a person who should be featured in Metro Giving? Let us know by e-mailing charity@metro.us.

In a city full of hustle and bustle, people of a certain age are working to keep up with New York's fast pace.

The Jewish Association for Services for the Aged works with the elderly, keeping them up to speed with programs like tai chi and yoga.

"[JASA] works to sustain and enrich the lives of the aging, so they can remain in the community with dignity and autonomy," said Elaine Rockoff, director of community-based programs.

While providing necessities such as meals, home care and housing for seniors in New York, JASA takes it a step further and



▶ Want to help? Visit JASA's website at www.jasa.org.

"The mental stimulation keeps people alive." ROCKOFF

Rockoff said. "It's life-affirming to keep them engaged in communities."

In addition to exercise, JASA, which serves seniors of any religion, offers art classes and discussion groups. The group also organizes painting classes, computer classes and current events discussions where the elderly read the day's newspaper and talk about it. Volunteers lead most of the programs.

also offers health and physical activities.

"These people would otherwise be isolated,"



**MARY ANN
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Tom Hill
CGA STAFF WRITER

Every three minutes another person falls behind on credit card debt. It's no wonder, since every major credit card company has nearly doubled the minimum monthly payment on consumers' bills. Federal Regulators forced the change because of their concern about the growing mountain of consumer debt, which stands at \$2.17 trillion. Many consumers can only pay the minimum payment, which can take up to 30 years to pay off. Now, relief is in sight for millions of Americans.

CreditGUARD of America, a non-profit licensed debt management service provider, is making a new program available to lower debt payments and become free of all credit card debt in only three to five years. Consumers need only \$2,000 or more in total credit card debt and behind on any account, to cut their payment by 35% to 50%, and reduce or eliminate interest charges altogether.

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Certified Credit Counselors at **CreditGUARD of America** provide Debt Relief Consultations at no charge, when you call **1-888-483-6410**. Calculate your interest rate savings instantly online when you visit their website at: www.creditguard.org/np

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The feed ... tweet tweet tweet

People have taken to Twitter following the death of North Korea leader Kim Jong-il. We've rounded up the very best tweets about the "Dear Leader."



► **@Prince_Harry** Kim Jong il is dead but the citizens of North Korea have been told he's entered a sleeping competition.

► **@ElyseeFranglais** President N #Sarkozy express deep sadness on hearing that he is now officially shortest leader in world

► **@MarcMaietta** North Korea...look out for a new Kim in town when "Kourtney and Kim Take Pyongyang"!

► **@david_j_roth** A tearful newscaster telling a nation without electricity that its dictator died of fatigue after a long train ride is exactly right.

► **@mikepostalakis** Bin Laden. Gaddafi. Now Kim Jong? I'd tread carefully, Leno.

► **@madeanbrendan** We did it Twitter. We made every Kim Jong-il joke there was to make. I'm sure North Korea will appreciate it once they get the Internet.

CHAOS THE

► With death of powerful leader, questions loom for future of the reclusive communist dynasty of North Korea ► Will young son of Kim Jong-il maintain control?

In the short term, international worries over North Korea following the death of Kim Jong-il center on a potential domestic leadership struggle that could heighten the risk of renewed conflict on the peninsula.

In the much longer run, however, the death could also usher in a quite different challenge: the hugely expensive task of reunifying Korea and reintegrating the world's most isolated state into the global economy.

The coming days could

be full of distinctly mixed signals. Yesterday morning, South Korean media reported the North had test-fired a short-range missile in what looked to be an early example of the sort of saber-rattling that many analysts fear.

All eyes will be on heir apparent Kim Jong-un to try to gauge whether he can truly take his father's place as undisputed national leader and commander of a military with some 5 million men under arms and perhaps up to



► North Koreans cry en masse in apparent mourning for the death of Kim Jong-il in this still grabbed from state media footage. Then again, if they don't cry convincingly enough, citizens of the Peoples Republic of North Korea could risk indefinite detention — not only for themselves but also for their entire extended family.

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Many doubt that he can. "There is a real risk of internal instability, particularly within the elite," said Michael Denison, research director at London-based risk consultancy Control Risks. "It's not clear at the moment that Kim Jong-un will be able to clearly entrench his control."

The young man, about 28 years old, was only presented as his father's successor last year — leaving him little time to build support.

Many expect his uncle, Jang Song-thaek, to remain a key force — perhaps ruling behind the scenes as the younger man builds experience, but perhaps also increasingly in confrontation with him.

REUTERS

Obama's quandary

WASHINGTON. Kim Jong-il's death could dim hopes for fresh nuclear disarmament talks with the United States and its key Asian allies as an untested and largely unknown heir takes charge of one of the world's most feared atomic renegade states. The most crucial immediate question for Washington is whether Kim's hermetic state can survive his death and complete a power transition to his youngest son Kim Jong-un. REUTERS

Did you know?

Six interesting facts about Kim Jong-il:

- 1 Like other men with a Napoleon complex, he wore high heels.
- 2 For a leader of a country plagued by starvation, Kim Jong-il was an extremely discriminating gourmand.
- 3 He was a skilled equestrian. Once he even appeared in a TV movie on one of his white horses.
- 4 Once he needed painkillers for an injury. For one month, his administrative staff members were injected with the same painkiller as
- 5 He loved movies. The dictator reportedly owned more than 20,000 videos. James Bond was a particular favorite (though presumably he didn't much like "Die Another Day," where 007 is tortured in North Korea).
- 6 He was a basketball fan, and particularly loved Michael Jordan. During a period of appeasement, the United States presented him with the basketball star's autograph.

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U.S. Two Cent - 1864 Small Motto.....	Up To.....\$1,000
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\$5.00 1909O, 1929.....	Up To.....	\$6,500
\$10.00 1793 13 Leaves Below Eagle, 1796 9 Leaves Below Eagle.....	Up To.....	\$20,500
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Breitling.....	\$15,000	Illinois.....	\$1,500	Chronograph Watches.....	\$16,500
Cartier.....	\$12,500	Jules Jurgenson.....	\$16,000	Ladies Watches.....	\$11,000
Corum.....	\$3,000	LeCourte.....	\$6,000	Musical Watches.....	\$37,500
Ditshiem.....	\$14,000	Longines.....	\$13,000	Pocket Watches.....	\$52,500
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— J. Grace

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— A. Davis

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— J. Simek

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— C. Sweeney

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— D. Rees

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— D. Smith

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— J. Bloomquist

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Gingrich fading in Iowa, nationally

► Newt's time as GOP front-runner could soon be done
► Drops to third in Iowa ► Lead gone in national poll

Presidential nominee Newt Gingrich's status as Republican front-runner is fading after weeks of attack ads from rivals and intense media exposure of his political history and personality.

A Public Policy Polling survey of likely Republican-caucus attendees in the key state of Iowa released yesterday showed the former House speaker dropping to third place there from first in the space of a week.

His lead also has evaporated in national poll.

"Newt Gingrich's campaign is rapidly imploding and Gingrich has now seen a big drop in his Iowa

standing two weeks in a row," Public Policy Polling, which is affiliated with the Democratic Party, said in a statement.

Gingrich earned just 14 percent in the latest Iowa poll compared to 22 percent a week ago and 27 percent two weeks ago.

Congressman Ron Paul took over the lead with 23 percent, a five point increase in the past weeks. Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, Gingrich's main national rival, was second with 20 percent.

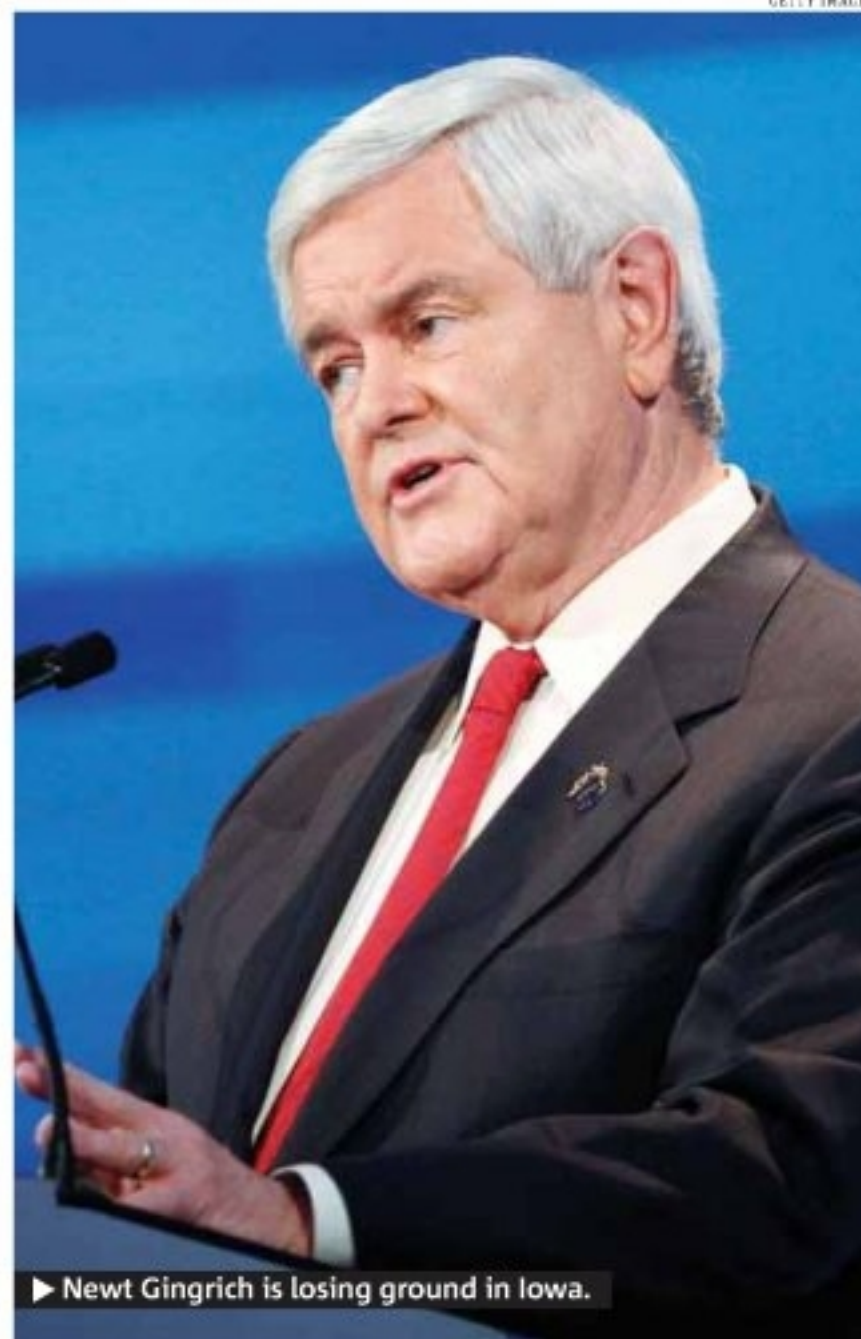
The survey of almost 600 people, taken Dec. 16-18, had a 4 percentage point margin of error.

REUTERS

Tax break dead?

House Speaker John Boehner yesterday effectively killed a short-term tax break and called on lawmakers to negotiate a full year payroll tax cut extension for 160 million U.S. workers.

"The idea that tax policy can be done two months at a time is the kind of activity we see here in Washington that will put the economy off its track," he said. REUTERS



► Newt Gingrich is losing ground in Iowa.

metro

MAN AND WOMAN
OF THE YEAR

2011

Apple co-founder Steve Jobs received two votes for every one for the Occupy movement yesterday, as voting in Metro's Man and Woman of the Year event continues. The two nominees are almost neck and neck — the Occupy movement retains a lead, but it is a fraction of what it was before the weekend.

To vote: Send your pick to mwoy@metro.us. The choices are Steve Jobs, the Occupy movement, or Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. Voting ends at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 22.

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THE WORD



Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip [@dorothyatmetro](#) [dorothy.robinson@metro.us](#)

These soulful singers on their diva-like behavior

It was a diva-licious red carpet Sunday night at New York City's Hammerstein Ballroom in honor of "VH1 Divas Celebrates Soul," where the music channel paid homage to the cities that inspire today's soulful divas. But luckily, the star-studded performers who rocked the red carpet weren't such prima donnas that they wouldn't stop and chat with Metro to dish about their most diva-like behavior.

— With additional reporting by Jeryl Brunner



"What do I diva out most about? When I'm hungry or cold. When I'm hungry, I'm cranky. I've gotta eat. And when I'm cold, I'm not comfortable."

MARY J. BLIGE



"VH1 Divas Celebrates Soul" premiered yesterday on VH1. But don't worry, you can catch the show in reruns all week.

"I'm a diva with my food. Being a Weight Watchers girl, I only get so many points, so you don't want to waste them. So I [become a real] diva about my food."

JENNIFER HUDSON



"My nails! [Giggles] I'm very excited about seeing all these divas. I don't put myself in that class. But if someone says I'm a diva, then I guess I am."

DOLLY PARTON



"I like to think I'm a pretty humble. My [contract] rider is pretty simple. It's just water and a bottle of coconut Ciroc. It mellows me out a little bit before the show. But if I don't get it, I don't cause a fit. I don't complain. I didn't get it tonight, and I'm happy."

TRAVIE MCCOY

"I can't stand to have my feet hurt. I can't bear it. It changes my whole personality. I normally carry flip-flops. I went to the Grammy's in flip flops one year because my shoes hurt so bad."

JILL SCOTT



"I diva out about my music. I have to be, baby. It's what I do. It's what I do. It's my life. It's my sanity."

CHAKA KHAN

His 50 Cents on Chaka Khan

50 Cent didn't have much to say about being a diva, but he did want to talk about his love for date Chaka Khan. "Chaka Khan — there are so many things," he told us. "Let me sit here to explain this to you to make sure you get this. [It's] the tone of her voice, the choices she has made in music, [the people she] influenced — you know how many babies were made to Chaka Khan?"



The feed ...

► Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Piers Morgan is going by the rule of threes, Howard Stern wants some news, Joan Rivers is adhering to tradition and Bette Midler is in pain.

► @piersmorgan

Not a great year for tyrants... BinLaden, Gadhafi, now Kim Jong-il

► @HowardStern

Can't find a newspaper.

► @Joan_Rivers

The recipe for Christmas goose is the same as Hanukkah goose. The difference is we let the housekeeper cook it.

► @BetteMidler

Yes many things are horrible, but how about ingrown toenails? Mommmeeeee!!!!!!



Bette Midler

Talking points

No Bieber, there isn't a Santa Claus

Justin Bieber never believed in Santa Claus. "My mom always told me there

wasn't a Santa," the pop star tells AOL Music. "This was her logic: She thought if I grew up knowing about Santa then finding out he wasn't real, that it would be like she was lying to me. And then when she told me about God, I maybe wouldn't believe her." Luckily, it was a tidbit that Bieber was good enough to keep to himself.

"I didn't tell my friends or ruin it for anyone," he says. "I was a good kid."

Lohan sells out again and again

For the first time in a long while, Lindsay Lohan has a bona fide hit on her hands. Retailers are reportedly

having trouble keeping copies of her issue of Play-boy in stock, according to TMZ. There also has been a surge of online subscribers to the magazine's website since the release of the troubled actress's naked pictorial.

Ellen moves in to Pitt's home

Brad Pitt didn't have to look far to find a buyer for his Malibu mansion: Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi snatched up the \$12 million property with private beach access, according to Us Weekly. "It was a quick transaction and Brad's stuff is already out," a source says. "[They] would like to start using the house immediately."



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Celebs counting down to Christmas

1. Luke Pritchard of The Kooks performed on stage at the O2 Academy on Sunday in Leeds, U.K.
2. Justin Bieber and Stevie Wonder performed onstage at Stevie Wonder's 16th annual House Full of Toys benefit concert held at Nokia Theatre on Saturday in Los Angeles.
3. Chris Martin of Coldplay performed in Rotterdam, Netherlands, on Saturday.
4. Bryan Batt signed his new book "Big, Easy Style: Creating Rooms You Love To Live In" at Bergdorf Goodman on Saturday in New York City.

5. Actress Kathy Griffin made Christmas cards with holiday shoppers at Westfield Culver City shopping mall Sunday in Culver City, Calif.

6. Scott Weiland performed songs from his Christmas album "Most Wonderful Time of the Year" at the City Winery on Saturday in New York City.

7. Designer Patricia Field attended her 2011 Rock & Shop Trunk Show at the Patricia Field Boutique on Sunday in New York City.

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TV watch list

'Kathy Griffin: Tired Hooker'

SPECIAL. Maybe the comedian took some inspiration for the title of her current standup special from her own workload — Griffin's done four of these in the last year alone.

Premiere, 10 p.m., Bravo

'Lidia Celebrates America'

REALITY. The Italian cuisine queen celebrates the food and holiday traditions of immigrants that have made the dinner tables of America so eclectic — and so very delicious — in this four-part series.

Miniseries premiere, 8 p.m., PBS • AMBER RAY



Stephen Merchant is the award-winning co-creator of "The Office" and "Extras." He's now embarking on his first stand-up comedy tour.

Coming to America

► Stephen Merchant, best known to audiences as Ricky Gervais' sidekick, branches out on his own for his first-ever stand-up tour ► Watch out, ladies, he's on the prowl ► Tricks for keeping a straight face (editing helps)

Stephen Merchant is probably best known to American audiences as Ricky Gervais' tall, ginger sidekick — the one who seems to be the calm voice of reason to Gervais' acerbic wit in hits like "The Office," "An Idiot Abroad" and soon-to-be-released "Life's Too Short."

But Merchant actually

started his award-winning comedy career doing stand-up before teaming up with Gervais to create "The Office." "I just sort of got the itch again," he says of bringing his comedy talents on the road. "It's like malaria. You think you got away and then it comes back again."

Merchant says the main topic of his solo routine is his search for a wife, hence the "Hello Ladies" title. "Oh, you know, romantic misfortune and all that," he says. But the 42-city, 80-date tour is helping him on his quest. "I've been receiving letters and photographs [from women], saying, 'Choose me.' Honestly, it's unsettled me slightly."

Interested, ladies? Here are three more Merchant-approved factoids:

On if his humor translates to an American audience

"Well, there's the question," he laughs. "But I'm sure. I'm very influenced by American comedy. My big hero is Woody Allen. I would listen to his tapes religiously. I'm very into self-deprecating Jewish humor, even though I'm not Jewish myself."

Why he is still single

"I blame the city," he notes. "When you are in a place

like New York City or London, there is so much choice," he notes. "Growing up in a town where there are 80 people, your second cousin looks good."

How he keeps a straight face

He doesn't. He clarifies: "The truth is, there are a lot of outtakes where we are in hysterics. For the new series ["Life's Too Short"], there is a whole battery of outtakes where it's impossible to talk. If it looks like we're keeping a straight face, it's thanks to careful editing."

DOROTHY ROBINSON
dorothy.robinson@metro.us

If you go

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mybooks

You and me could write a bad romance

When a friend asked Kathy Newbern-Fletcher what people would be surprised to know about her, she had no idea where the answer would lead her.

"I said I had written a then-unpublished romance novel," she says, "and over lunch, one of my friends just said in passing, 'Wouldn't it be really fun if you could read about yourself in one of those books?'"

That day, Yournovel.com was conceived.

Flash-forward to more than 20 years later, and couples can answer 26 online questions about their relationship — her pet name, the car he drives, her favorite lingerie color — and Yournovel.com creators Newbern and husband J.S. Fletcher will put the details into one of their selected 28 different romance novels and personalize the love story. The books are priced between \$40 and \$100, with the choice to customize the front cover with a picture of the star couple.

Ranging "from mild to wild," the stories to choose from on Yournovel.com take the relationship out of its comfort zone and place the couples anywhere from an African safari to a sultry



► Newbern-Fletcher, right, and her husband J.S. seem to still find a spark in their relationship.

So exactly how much romance?

Despite the sexy scenes in some of the more "wild" novels, customers try to heat up the action even further.

"We've had people say, 'Make mine X-rated, or triple X-rated,' and I have to be like, 'No, I can't go there,'" says Newbern-Fletcher.

Tahitian adventure. Newbern-Fletcher says that despite the variations in names and details, the stories all have the same underlying message.

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► Making sure your child is comfortable is key.

► Book a nonstop flight if possible when planning your vacation, since multiple descents cause more strain on the ears. **RACHEL MORRIS FOR PARENTS MAGAZINE**

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Charity



► Halper and Wessinger got to show the Biebs their creation this November.

For the Bieber obsessed

High school freshmen Lizzie Halper & Ellie Wessinger just



released their first self-published book, "Got Bieber Fever? A Fan's Guide," with all proceeds going to Pencils for Promise, a Bieber-supported organization that seeks to build schools in developing countries. The 148-page cof-

fee table book contains never-before-seen photos by New York Times photographer Robert Caplin, who toured with Bieber for six months. \$18, www.amazon.com **METRO/ME**

DIY

Getting crafty this Christmas

Holiday crafting is not just a practical way of whiling away cold winter afternoons; it offers a nice excuse for parents to

spend quality time with their kids, creating festive rituals that bond the family. Here is a project everyone will want to partake in. **EMMA E. FORREST**

Stained-glass windows

Ingredients:

- 2 oz soft, light brown sugar
- 2 oz butter, softened
- 1 small egg
- 4½ oz plain flour
- ½ oz cornflour
- 1 teaspoon all-spice
- 20 hard candies



You will need:
► A large-shaped cookie cutter

- A drinking straw
- A small round cutter, slightly bigger than the cookies

Directions:

- 1 Heat the oven to 350F. Grease and line a baking tray.
- 2 Beat the sugar and butter in a large bowl. Mix half the egg into the butter and sugar. Stir in the flour, cornflour and allspice. Mix together really well.

- 3 Squeeze the mixture together to form a ball of dough. Roll out the dough until it is as thick as your pinky finger. Use the large cutter to cut out shapes. Lift them onto the tray with a spatula. Squeeze the scraps together and roll them out again. Cut out more cookies.

- 4 Make a hole in each cookie by pressing the straw through the dough, near the top of each one. Use

the small, round cutter to cut a hole in the middle of each cookie.

- 5 Put a candy piece into the hole in the middle of each cookie. Bake for 12 minutes. Leave on the tray to cool, and then apply icing. Once the icing sets, tie a ribbon through the small hole and hang the cookie on your tree.
—From "Usborne Christmas Baking for Children," by Fiona Patchett, www.usborne.com

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We need our troops at home

RE: "IRAQ WAR ENDS, TROOPS COME HOME": It was good to see heavy "coming home from Iraq" coverage in Metro, unlike elsewhere. Metro wrote of troops at the Iraq border in Kuwait cheering that the last column made it without incident. If we are willing to ignore U.S. troops being shot at, we could leave Afghanistan in a month as well. **RICHARD KANE, VIA E-MAIL**

I'm sure everyone is glad that our troops are coming home from Iraq. However, we still have troops stationed in more than

100 countries — and are building more bases overseas while closing bases at home. Our leaders tell us that our country is being protected by U.S. involvement in foreign conflicts. Why are they not concerned about protecting our borders? We must protect our country by bringing our troops home, building up our defenses at home and controlling our borders. **JANET MCCARTHY, FLUSHING**

Vote the little kings out now

If there was ever a time for term limits it is now.

Our elected officials think they are kings for life. How else could they justify being bought and paid for by corporate America — with absolutely no interest in the American people? Let's vote out the career politician from sea to shining sea! **MIKE MILLER, VIA E-MAIL**

Eight out of 10 not too bad?

I see that Newt has been soaring in polls among Christian conservatives. Are these the same people who would place the 10 Commandments at their courthouse door? If

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife" are truly pinnacles of American law to be devoutly enforced, they why would they choose such a blatant violator as their champion? **CHARLIE CHACE, VIA E-MAIL**

Why give Obama ultimate power?

The Democrat co-traitors say Obama's promise not to apply indefinite detention to American citizens in this country is enough for them to approve treason. Our hope and prayer is that the Supreme Court will do its duty and declare this treason as well as unconstitutional and throw them all in jail for attempting to overthrow democracy. **CHARLES COUCH, BED-STUY**

Horoscope

♈ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21. Just because you're at a boisterous event doesn't mean you can't command the type of attention that you'd like. You'll find that whispering will have more impact than shouting.

♊ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19. If there is someone you know who could use a little help, you should yield to your charitable inclinations and pitch in. Your good deed will produce a huge harvest.

♋ Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 19. Trust your instincts regarding the outcome of events, because they're likely to be more accurate than your common sense. This time, things could be as good as you hope.

♌ Pisces Feb. 20-March 20. Speak up if you have something to say when a self-appointed person is fouling up the works. You're the one who'll know how to handle it without making that individual look bad.

♍ Aries March 21-April 19. Discovering that others are talking about you is no cause for alarm, because what they are saying would actually flatter you. Don't jump to conclusions.

♎ Taurus April 20-May 20. Don't hesitate to let it be known that you must study any proposal brought to you, especially if a contract is in-

volved. Take all the time you need to read in between the lines.

♏ Gemini May 21-June 20. There are some very strong indications that someone new could enter your life — if not today, then very soon. It'll be a person you'll like very much.

♐ Cancer June 21-July 22. Getting involved in something creative in which you'll be using your hands as well as your mind will bring you much gratification. Don't hesitate to take on something new.

♑ Leo July 23-Aug. 22. Don't be bashful about complimenting someone you've just met in front of others, and do let this person know how much you enjoy his or her company. She or he will be flattered.

♒ Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22. Put your artistic talents to work during your spare time and beautify your surroundings instead of sitting around on the couch.

♓ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23. Don't turn down any invitation that gives you a chance to mix and meet with new, fun people. The more contacts you make, the more chances you'll have of meeting a truly nice friend.

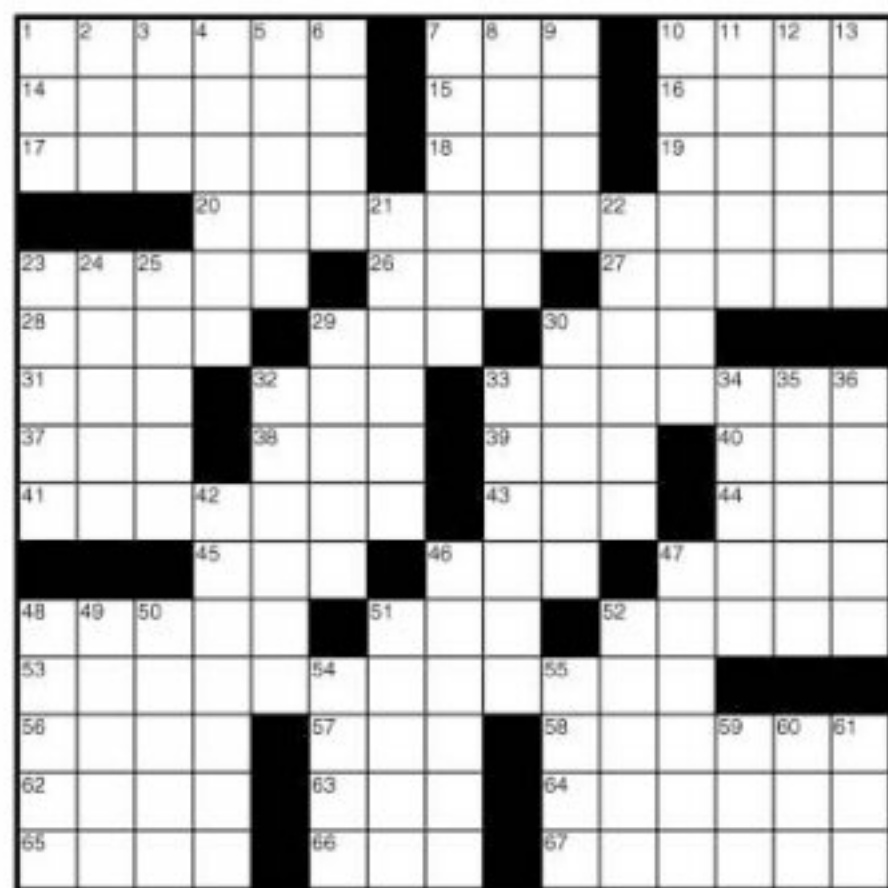
♈ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22. Although they may come in increments, you'll have excellent chances for producing long-range benefits for yourself. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**

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Across

- 1 Vampire's target
7 Biz rival
10 Goldfish
14 Draw squiggles
15 A Knute successor
16 "Typee" sequel
17 Return address
18 Toon pooch
19 Courts
20 Aerobic exercises (2 wds.)
23 North Dakota city
26 Genetic strand
27 Popped up
28 Burnoose wearer
29 Ostrich look-alike
30 Assist
31 King, in France
32 Move jauntily
33 Throb
37 Mdse. bill
38 Canape topper
39 Wolfed
40 Zero, in sports
41 Look closely
43 It's freezing!
44 Versatile vehicle
45 Go ___ diet
46 Bluebottle
47 Paul Drake's creator
48 Parboil
51 Worthless coin
52 Elbow opposites
53 Classic car feature (2 wds.)
56 Fictional governess
57 Smokehouse hanger
58 Edge
62 Authorizes
63 Banjo cousin
64 Very tired
65 Toga party site
66 Glove sz.
67 Heavy hammer

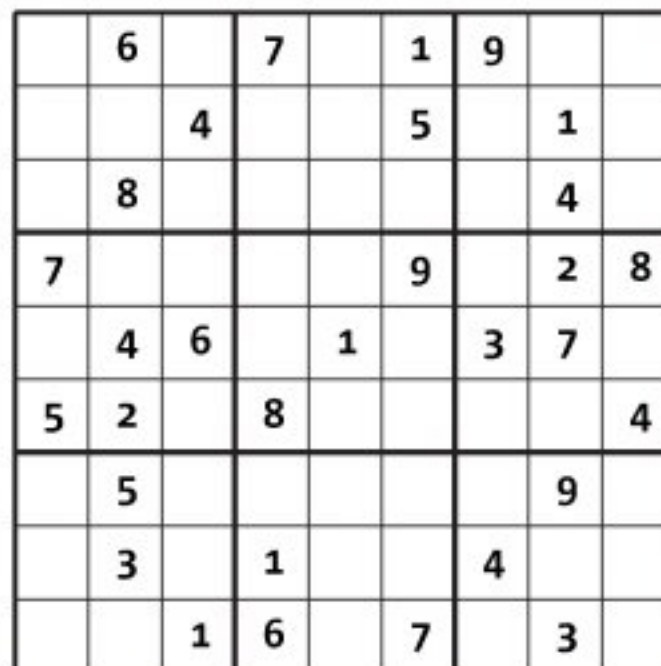


Down

- 1 Gridiron stats
2 Weed whacker
3 Harry's sidekick
4 Chore (2 wds.)
5 Kayak owner, maybe
6 School period
7 Type of flour
8 Gladiator's place
9 Big ___ theory
10 Fraidy-cats
11 It merged with BP
12 Black birds

- 13 Oater extras
21 Drive forward
22 Warden
23 Madame Curie
24 Socrates' forte
25 Gullible
29 Cash, casually
30 Film cowboy Gene ___
32 Godfather portrayer
33 Baby food
34 Lapis lazuli color
35 Championship
36 "En garde" weapons

- 42 Most daring
46 Bubbled up
47 Dinner course
48 Ledge
49 More demure
50 Ventricle neighbor
51 Moccasin, maybe
52 Hillock
54 Baba au ___
55 Subsidies
59 Family man
60 Joule fraction
61 Deli bread

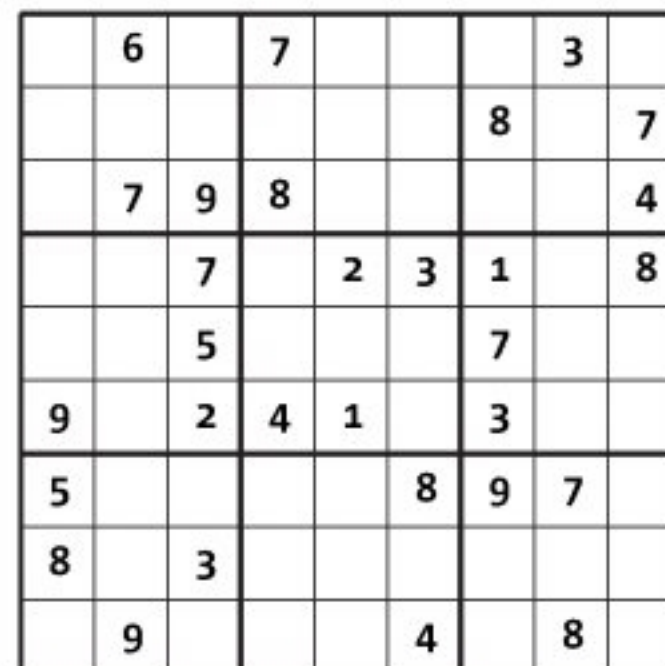


SUDOKU LEVEL: EASY

Solution to yesterday's crossword



How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.



SUDOKU LEVEL: HARD

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holiday

FREDERICK FLORIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



► Strasbourg's Christmas market. Where Christmas fans shop.

Handcrafted gifts in France's Strasbourg

They don't call Strasbourg the Capital of Christmas for nothing: half-timbered houses, cobble streets, a gothic Cathedral and garlands of lights set the mood for France's oldest and best Christmas market. In fact, there are 12 markets

scattered around this canal-traced city, each with its own distinct pleasures. Intricate handcrafted gifts, ornaments and nativity figures spill from glittering stalls at Place de la Cathédrale's Marche de Noël and the ancient Christkindelsmarik at Place Broglie. Artisanal food stands at Place des Meuniers, proffer such delicacies as pain d'épices and hot, spiced wine.

Europe's best holiday markets

► Nestled in the shadow of ancient cathedrals or in illuminated town squares, Europe's bustling holiday markets offer a taste of Christmas through the ages
► Here, we highlight four very festive destinations and their best memory-making markets

DIETER NAGL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

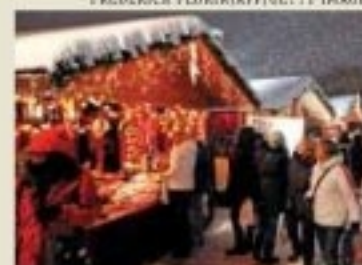


► Celebrate the holidays by going ice skating in London.

Christmas carols and ice skating in London

The city of London becomes one sprawling market at Christmastime, with revelry on every corner — from sing-along concerts at St. Martins-in-the-Fields to a medieval Christmas celebration and ice-skating at the Tower of London. Regents and Oxford Streets' light displays put shoppers in the mood, and the historically minded can dine with Henry VIII and his new queen Catherine Howard at an authentic 1540 Christmas at Hampton Court Palace. Don't miss the Christmas Nightmare tour led by Ebenezer Scrooge, who explores London tombs while expounding on characters from Christmases past.

FREDERICK FLORIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Celebratory flavors at the Old Viennese Christmas Market

The Magic of Advent market at Vienna's sprawling Rathausplatz market is the epitome of Christmas. Wooden stalls offer hand-made gifts, sweets, the scent of roasting chestnuts and the traditional hot brandied Weihnachtspunsch, all under a towering 90-foot tree. The city's heritage is also vibrantly alive at the Old Viennese Christmas Market, where choral music fills the air.

Dazzling lights at Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens

Millions of dazzling Christmas lights at Copenhagen's historic Tivoli Gardens illuminate Denmark's most popular Christmas destination, with ice-skating on the lake, parades, carolers, firework displays and, of course, Santa Claus. For this year's Russian theme, visitors explore a Russian city, starring a replica of St. Basil's Cathedral complete with onion domes and carillon bells. The traditional Christmas market offers 70 stalls of local crafts and gifts.

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Nets all about keeping Deron

► New Jersey's season could very well take back seat to keeping All Star
► Team still showing interest in adding Howard ► But can Lopez mature?

JULIAN FINNEY/GETTY IMAGES



► Soon-to-be free agent Deron Williams will be the main focus of Nets fans on and off the court this season.

In the news

Kubel signs as D-Back

The Diamond-backs came to terms with former Twin Jason Kubel yesterday on a two-year, \$15 million deal. Kubel had spent the first seven years of his career, not including a missed year due to injury, with Minnesota. He batted .273 with 12 HR last season. **● METRO**

In the news



Stojakovic will retire from NBA
He can probably still shoot, but the wear and tear of a 13-year career has ended for Peja Stojakovic.

Stojakovic, one of the best shooters of the past decade, won a championship with Dallas last season. He's fourth all-time in 3-pointers made.

There are four players with the last name Williams on the Nets' roster. But everyone's eyes are on one.

Ever since the Nets traded for Deron Williams last season the talk has been about how to keep him. In the preseason, that talk's centered around trading for Orlando Magic big man Dwight Howard.

In the meantime, this will be Williams' team after his brief 12-game stint late last season. Williams averaged 15 points and 12.8 assists per game while the Nets lost eight of the 12.

And if they don't obtain another All-Star player, the worry will be about keeping the one they have.

Starting five



The Nets may still be in trade talks for Dwight Howard, but until then this is their lineup:

G Deron Williams (20.1 ppg, 10.3 apg)
Averaged only 15 ppg for the Nets, but did increase apg to 12.8.

G Anthony Morrow (13.2 ppg, 42.3 3-pt.%)
Finished fourth in the conference in 3-point shooting percentage.

F Damion James (4.4 ppg, 16 mpg)
Stephen Graham could start here, but James was a rookie last season.

F Shawne Williams (7.1 ppg, 3.7 rpg)
Sheldon, Shawne are interchangeable Williams.

C Brook Lopez (20.4 ppg, 6 rpg)
Just needs to increase rebounds to be a big-time center.

"I want to come back. In a perfect world I would come back and re-sign here if everything aligns," Williams said in an interview during Saturday's pre-season loss to the Knicks.

"I love the organization. I like the area. I love living in New York. That's not the problem. I just want to win. I want to be able to win. I'm 27. I'll be 28 when I sign a new deal. That will take me into my mid-30s. That's a big part of my career, so I just want to make sure I'm making the right decision, and I'll look at all options just to be safe."

LARRY FLEISHER
sports@metro.us



Davis is officially a Knick

Baron Davis, a former All-Star who's entering his 13th season, reportedly signed for the one-year veteran's minimum worth \$1.4 million, but will be out anywhere between

eight to 10 weeks with a herniated disk in his back. "It's been a dream to play in New York," Davis said. "I've always wanted to call the Garden home."

● TONY WILLIAMS

2011-12 NETS REG. SEASON SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT TIME

DECEMBER

MON. 26, AT WASHINGTON, 7 P.M.
TUE. 27, ATLANTA, 7:30 P.M.
THU. 29, AT ORLANDO, 7 P.M.
FRI. 30, AT ATLANTA, 7:30 P.M.

JANUARY

SUN. 1, AT CLEVELAND, 6 P.M.
MON. 2, INDIANA, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 4, AT BOSTON, 7:30 P.M.
FRI. 6, AT TORONTO, 7 P.M.
SAT., 7 MIAMI, 7:30 P.M.
MON. 9, ATLANTA, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 11, AT DENVER, 9 P.M.
FRI. 13, AT PHOENIX, 9 P.M.
SAT. 14, AT UTAH, 9 P.M.
MON. 16, AT L.A. CLIPPERS, 3:30 P.M.
WED. 18, GOLDEN STATE, 7:30 P.M.
SAT. 21, OKLAHOMA CITY, 8 P.M.
SUN. 22, CHARLOTTE, 6 P.M.
MON. 23, AT CHICAGO, 7 P.M.
WED. 25, AT PHILADELPHIA, 7 P.M.
FRI. 27, AT CLEVELAND, 7:30 P.M.
SUN. 29, TORONTO, 6 P.M.
TUE. 31, AT INDIANA, 7 P.M.

FEBRUARY

WED. 1, DETROIT, 7:30 P.M.
FRI. 3, MINNESOTA, 7:30 P.M.
SAT. 4, AT NEW YORK, 7:30 P.M.
MON. 6, CHICAGO, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 8, DETROIT, 7:30 P.M.
FRI. 10, AT DETROIT, 7:30 P.M.
SAT. 11, SAN ANTONIO, 8 P.M.
WED. 15, MEMPHIS, 7:30 P.M.
THU. 16, AT INDIANA, 7 P.M.
SAT. 18, AT CHICAGO, 4 P.M.
SUN. 19, MILWAUKEE, 7 P.M.
MON. 20, AT NEW YORK, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 22, ORLANDO, 7:30 P.M.
TUE. 28, AT DALLAS, 8:30 P.M.

MARCH

FRI. 2, AT BOSTON, 7:30 P.M.
SUN. 4, AT CHARLOTTE, 6 P.M.
TUE. 6, AT MIAMI, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 7, L.A. CLIPPERS, 8 P.M.
FRI. 9, AT CHARLOTTE, 7 P.M.
SAT. 10, HOUSTON, 8 P.M.
MON. 12, MILWAUKEE, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 14, TORONTO, 7:30 P.M.
FRI. 16, AT ORLANDO, 7 P.M.
SAT. 17, NEW ORLEANS, 8 P.M.
MON. 19, CLEVELAND, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 21, WASHINGTON, 7:30 P.M.
FRI. 23, AT ATLANTA, 7:30 P.M.
SAT. 24, CHARLOTTE, 7:30 P.M.
MON. 26, UTAH, 7:30 P.M.
WED. 28, INDIANA, 7:30 P.M.
FRI. 30, AT GOLDEN STATE, 10:30 P.M.
SAT. 31, AT SACRAMENTO, 10 P.M.

APRIL

TUE. 3, AT L.A. LAKERS, 10:30 P.M.
WED. 4, AT PORTLAND, 10 P.M.
FRI. 6, WASHINGTON, 7:30 P.M.
SUN. 8, CLEVELAND, 6 P.M.
TUE. 10, PHILADELPHIA, 7:30 P.M.
FRI. 13, AT PHILADELPHIA, 7 P.M.
SAT. 14, BOSTON, 7:30 P.M.
MON. 16, MIAMI, 8 P.M.
WED. 18, NEW YORK, 7:30 P.M.
SAT. 21, AT MILWAUKEE, 8:30 P.M.
MON. 23, PHILADELPHIA, 7:30 P.M.
THU. 26, AT TORONTO, 8 P.M.

Rex starts smack talk early

► Loser of Giants-Jets could be out of the playoffs ► Jets head coach is already talking big ► Ryan: 'I never came to be little brother to anybody'

As if it wasn't a big game before, the Christmas Eve game between the Jets and Giants now has playoff implications for both teams — and one team could well be packing for the golf course come the final whistle.

With both New York teams coming off devastating losses, the Jets are looking to regroup against their crosstown rivals.

"I mean this is going to be a great game. And quite honestly, I never came here to be little brother to anybody, so it's on. We have to go out and prove it. You don't play each other for four years, so there's some bragging rights and all that. There's some more important things that go into it, because basically, you're



► Rex Ryan was back to his old way, talking trash about the Giants despite the Eagles' loss.

out of the playoffs if you lose this game — either team is," Ryan said. "So, we know what's at stake, but is there bragging rights and

all that? Yeah, absolutely. We want to be the best team in New York, but we want to be the best team in NFL, and it starts with be-

ing the best team in New York."

KRISTIAN DYER
sports@metro.us

LB Scott: 'Ran into buzzsaw'

In Sunday's 45-19 loss in Philadelphia, the Eagles ran out to a 28-0 lead by the middle point of the second quarter. To their credit, the Jets did respond with 13 unanswered points before halftime but it wasn't enough.

"We just ran into a buzz saw. That's a good, high-powered football team. You can't have the mistakes that we made. We can't turn the ball over; we can't have blown assignments. You can't allow [Mike] Vick to sit back there and not get pressure on him. They did a good job; we



tried to rally back," Jets linebacker Bart Scott said yesterday at a

charity event for his foundation at the Pole Position. "We just dug ourselves into too big a hole.

"We had a setback but when we look up, it seemed like the rest of the NFL had a setback. I don't know. It was one of those days; if it was a full moon the night before, something in the Kool Aid. It was one of those days. The only thing that did happen well for us is that all the other teams lost as well, [but] we did lose an opportunity to separate ourselves," Scott said.

● METRO/KD

Jets, Bengals fight for last playoff spot

Currently at 8-6, the Jets hold a tentative grasp on the sixth and final playoff spot.

Two wins to close out the season would all but assure them of a third-straight trip to the postseason. The Jets did get help on Sunday as the teams jockeying for the playoff position around them, such as Tennessee, Oakland and Denver, all lost.

The one team that didn't lose was Cincinnati, who the Jets are now in the most direct competition with.

The Jets lead the Bengals — also at 8-6 — because they are 3-2 versus common opponents, while the Bengals are 2-2. But Cincinnati has the advantage of playing their final two games at home.

And while the fans and media break down all the scenarios, the team is looking at it much more simply.

"This is as close as you can get to a playoff game

Who's left?

The Bengals' and Jets' remaining schedules:

- New York Jets
NYG (12/24), @MIA (1/1)
- Cincinnati Bengals
ARI (12/24), BAL (1/1)

without actually being called a playoff game," Jets linebacker Bart Scott said about this week's contest with the Giants. "Essentially you lose now you're going to go home.

"Whoever loses the game this week is pretty much done." ● METRO

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First order of business: Let Jets do the talking

JEFF ZELEVANSKY/GETTY IMAGES



► Hakeem Nicks dropped a wide-open touchdown pass early in Sunday's humiliating loss.

- Giants know they need to win out, but won't disparage Gang Green
- Still control destiny in NFC East

There's no rest for the weary Giants as they try to forget about Sunday's putrid performance and prepare for their cohabitants, the chatty Jets.

Despite all their troubles, the Giants (7-7) still control their own destiny. Win the remaining two games and they're champions of an NFC East division that no team seemingly wants to win.

First order of business is knocking off the mouthy Jets. But, for a team steeped in tradition, the Giants will let most of their talking be done on the field.

"I get it, but my focus is on the New York Giants and our season," quarterback Eli Manning said of all the surrounding hype. "It's an important game for both teams and both teams should come into the game with a lot of energy. It should be a great contest."

"Talking trash isn't going to help you out there on the field. We're not that kind of team."

LB MATHIAS KIWANUKA, GIANTS

In the end, however, Giants outside linebacker Mathias Kiwanuka said this contest is bigger than just bragging rights.

"It's going to be do or die, two teams that are fighting," said Kiwanuka. "The playoffs have already started for us."

"I know we're the better team. We just have to go out there and prove it. People are going to talk to each other, but in my opinion there's no sense in talking before the game, in the media or in the locker room."

TONY WILLIAMS
sports@metro.us



► Rolle

Rolle's comment fuels the Redskins

Giants safety Antrel Rolle's chirping before the Redskins game didn't go unnoticed.

Rolle said prior to the game the Giants "would win 99-of-100" against them. The Redskins swept the series and their players won't let him forget it.

"He gave us motivation," said former Giant Barry Cofield. "If they're going to win 95 out of 100, they've got to get started. They'd better get started winning some games real fast."

● METRO

5

The Giants have lost five of their last six games and still control their playoff lives.

38

New York is being outscored by their opponents by 38 points this season.

81

Antrel Rolle leads the team in tackles with 81 this year. He also leads in solo tackles (70).

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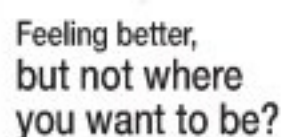
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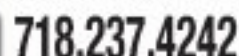
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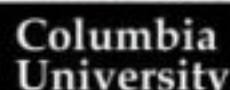
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